



THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

[Rembrandt.]



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Miscellanea.

SINCE our last issue the Irish Insurrection has absorbed public interest almost to the exclusion of every other topic. In Parliament it has been the subject of much discussion and many questions; and the Press has been full of incidents of the rising, often ridiculously exaggerated, sometimes, as in the case of the "four priests shot in a bunch" story of the *Daily Mail*, purely fictitious. The rebellion is now ended, and the world no longer in doubt as to the fate of its participants. Fifteen executions followed trial by court-

martial; sentences to varying terms of penal servitude were numerous, and arrests and deportations wholesale. Little knowledge of Irish history and of the Irish character is needed to predict the effect that such treatment will produce, even upon those that had no sympathy with the rising. The Cromwellian method of dealing with Ireland can only result in the defeat of its own ends. This fact has been emphatically insisted upon by the leading newspapers in England, as well as in this country; but to no purpose. In face of warning the Government still pursues a policy which tends only to embitter and exasperate the Irish at home and antagonize those abroad.

This state of feeling is not likely to be diminished when the leniency shown towards De Wet and his followers and the tolerance extended to Sir Edward Carson and the Ulster Covenanters are remembered. The existence of three armed forces in Ireland outside Government control is entirely due to Sir E. Carson's propaganda. He preached the doctrine that rebellion was no crime—at least in Ulster. He taught Ireland to arm and drill and prepare for war. And he not only went unpunished, but was entrusted with a share in the government of the country against which he preached rebellion. His forces paraded unhindered the streets of Belfast with all the display of war, and were allowed triumphantly to carry off their "gun-running" at Larne. But when the Nationalists repeated the latter experiment at Howth, the scenes which that day ensued on Bachelor's Walk are still painfully remembered in Dublin. These things, added to the severe measures exacted by the Government, some members of which tolerated them, others approved and aided, have only served to win sympathy for the Sinn Feiners from many who on Easter Monday had no approbation for their action or their cause.

A plea for general amnesty to the rank and file of the rebels has been strongly advocated; and we hope not in vain. If acceded to it will promote the interests of the State more than a hundred executions. While needlessly to empty Irish homes of their fathers, brothers and sons shall be to create wilfully a spirit of antipathy which will not be effaced for many years.

* * * * *

Many applications, with which, unfortunately, we could not comply, have reached us lately for a life of "Blessed Gabriel." However, we are glad to announce that we have procured some copies of the life published in America, there being no life published here except the penny booklet of the C.T.S. (Ireland). This latter, we may mention, is well worth reading. The price of the American work is two shillings and sixpence, postage extra.

The Genius of Shakespeare.

WE are all familiar with the popular idea that our Continental neighbours look upon England as a nation of shopkeepers. Were the truth of this view admitted, it would go far to prove that Englishmen must be by nature essentially prosaic. Yet it has been said with perfect truth that the greatest glory of England is her poetry. Among English poets Shakespeare is supreme. Other poets have taken for their domain some particular aspect of life or nature and treated it with more or less fidelity and success; while the genius of Shakespeare, like the eye of his own poet, glanced "from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven," and not only gave back what it beheld suffused with

The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the poet's dream,
but also created the airy forms of the spirit realm and the land of faery, which seem to pulse with life and to possess each one of them an individuality as distinct as those real personages whom he found ready to hand to appear as characters in his historical dramas. Supernatural inspiration alone was denied him, but the whole field of the actual and the possible, as far as it can be known by human reason, he might well claim as his own peculiar sphere. All nature, from the orbs of heaven which move with the rhythmic music down to the "crimson drops" that stain the petals of the cowslip, was unveiled before him, and all the moods of men, and all their passions, joy and sorrow, love and hate, hope and fear, find fit expression in his matchless speech. That man must have but an imperfect acquaintance with his achievements who would not hesitate to address to him the words of Hamlet to Horatio:

There are more things in heaven and earth
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

The real greatness of Shakespeare was unknown to his contemporaries: he trod "on earth unguessed at." This may be explained at least in part by the greatness of the age in which he lived, the heroic figures with which it was peopled. "It is with Shakespeare," says Goethe, "as with the mountains of Switzerland. Transport Mont Blanc to the level expanse of the Lüneburg Heath, and you will find no words to express your awe at its immensity, but if you visit it in its native home, if you approach it by crossing over the lofty neighbouring mountains, it will still indeed appear a giant, but it will no longer call forth the same feelings of astonishment and wonder." It would seem as if Shakespeare himself had but an imperfect sense of his own greatness, or as if the man was greater than his works. Not one of his plays was published with his sanction and co-operation. As he wrote, he had immediately practical ends alone in view, and he saw

his dramas as creations full of life and movement which from the stage should make their living appeal to the spectators, not as finished productions to be read in the study and analysed and criticized at leisure. This fact will account for those blemishes and defects which one finds in his works, but which, however, are merely on the surface, and do not touch the substance or core of what he wrote. And yet we cannot help feeling with Goethe that he was no mere poet of the theatre, and that the stage, nay, the whole visible universe itself, was too narrow for his mighty soul.

The universal admiration in which Shakespeare is held may be accounted for not so much by the sublimity of his genius as by its manysidedness. Other authors have excelled in tragedy or in comedy; Shakespeare alone has cultivated the whole field of the drama with equal success. He is alike great in his tragic and in his humorous creations; the buskin and the sock alike become him; he is equally at home in both. But perhaps it is in the domain of pure poetry that his supremacy is most apparent. His genius was essentially masculine, and yet no form of beauty in visible nature escaped his observation and homage. Some of the most exquisite passages in all his works show how much alive his gentle soul was to the beauty of flowers, and no poet has ever painted with at once so much fidelity to nature and power of imaginative idealization the ever-varying phenomena of dawn and twilight, of day and night, of moonlight and sunlight, of the ordered progression of the seasons. In the case of some other great poets, the references to nature leave us cold and unmoved; they seem more or less conventional and not chiefly due to personal observation; but the perfect accuracy of Shakespeare's language shows that what he describes he saw for himself and intimately felt.

Among the educative influences of a people, the national classics hold a foremost place. Their influence first felt and appreciated by the choicer spirits gradually extends in ever widening circles until it reaches even those who have little or no direct personal acquaintance with them. The character of a nation is thus largely moulded by the writings of those who, amid the disturbances caused by political, religious, and social changes, maintain their place as its accredited teachers. Many sayings of theirs in which wisdom is embodied or in which the various moods and feelings of men find perfect expression are in the mouths of all. And for us "who speak the tongue that Shakespeare spake" it is a priceless advantage that we possess in him a native teacher at once genial and authoritative. The lessons which he teaches, lessons of sincerity and courage and honour and love and piety, have all a tendency to ennoble the minds of those who yield themselves up to his habitual sway. We mark in him an absence of that tone of bitterness which so often jars upon us in the writings of authors less intensely human, and although we find in his works that divine pity and deep knowledge of human nature in its infinite complexity which help to explain the weaknesses and to extenuate the guilt

of men, he never abuses his art or skill for the purpose of making vice seem virtue or changing the inherent external morality of things. But he is no mere ethical teacher whose exclusive aim it is to hold "the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image," and to preach to men the commonplaces of morality. The highest function of poetry is to idealize and spiritualize the material, and no poet has accomplished this task with more felicity and success than Shakespeare. Both as a teacher and as a supreme artist in form and matter his influence is not limited by any bounds of empire, but those who in their infancy lisped the language which he used are more responsive to the magic of his touch, inasmuch as they understand more fully the subtler terms of expression which he employed and the more delicate shades of meaning which he intended to convey. Besides, many an exquisite passage in his works is intimately associated in our minds with some particular scene or person it may be of days long past, and thus possess for us a charm beyond its own intrinsic beauty. No tribute to the influence of Shakespeare as a supreme master of literature could be finer than that of Goethe: "Had I been born an Englishman, and had all the masterpieces of Shakespeare in their rich variety presented themselves to my awakening soul imperiously compelling my attention, I should have been completely overpowered, and I should not have known what to do. I could never have gone forward with cheerful heart and unembarrassed mind: on the contrary, I should have been obliged to pass many an hour in meditation and to look around in all directions to see if anywhere I could find a way of escape." These words of the great sage were not spoken in the exuberance of youthful enthusiasm: they were the deliberate utterance of his ripe old age, after he had spent half a century in the strenuous cultivation of literature and science, and at a time when he himself stood upon the highest pinnacle of poetic achievement.

Three centuries have elapsed since Shakespeare passed away. Time deals unerringly with the writings of men: it consigns to oblivion or neglect what is of inferior merit, and adds to the glory of that which is worthy to endure. His friend Ben Jonson said of him: "he was not of an age, but for all time," and the event has proved the truth of these words beyond what he who wrote them could have expected. And this may be explained not only by the unequalled greatness of his genius, but also by the fact that he chose to deal with the elemental passions and emotions of humanity. Nations may have their special characteristics, centuries their distinctive traits, but men remain ever essentially the same, impelled to action by the same passions, moved by the same hopes and fears. Shakespeare was not a child of his age in the sense that Dante and Milton were children of theirs. Had he been, he would still have been unrivalled, but his power to move us would not have been, as it is, supreme.

PHILIP COGHLAN, C.P.

Anna.

NOW that Anna was going to marry a rich man, Catherine Hackett thought she might allow herself the luxury of being extravagant. Besides, it was not really extravagance: it was only right that she, the mother of Anna, should look presentable in the eyes of her future son-in-law. So, on fine days, when she had tidied up the cottage, she sometimes put on her shawl of Irish wool and walked to the town to look at the shop windows, especially those displaying fancy goods and jewellery, all of "gold."

It was a busy town not far from the sea. Cargo ships were frequently coming and going, so that it was always full of seamen and strangers, and a person could do a trade with these without ever having a shop.

The shops were very interesting to Catherine. She had been so busy all her life trying to rear Anna and make ends meet that she had never had time to go shopping. If she had wanted anything for herself, a pair of boots or a skirt, she had hurriedly bought it of a market day, or commissioned a neighbour to bring it back. But now she had plenty of time to pick and choose and get good value. Thus she had acquired a "gold" chain, a brooch of "diamonds," and a wedding-ring, for once in the bad times she had pawned her own wedding-ring of real gold.

As she walked to and from the town on these autumn days, the path under her feet strewn with golden leaves, the berries of the briar-rose dashing the hedges with crimson, the crisp air warmed by the yellow sun blowing in her face, she thanked God for a lucky woman. To be sound in mind and body and going to end her days in peace among her children, and grand-children maybe, it was not every woman could say that. Of course, there had been the bad days long ago, days without work, days when there had been no bread in the house, nor fuel in the corner; days when she, a lace-maker, used to weaving things of beauty with her hands, had been obliged to do common charring, to borrow a loaf, or to go along the hedges under the grey sky of winter, in the north-east wind, gathering *broсна* like a tinker's wife. Sorrow she had seen, and death. That salt river running so swiftly by the town had carried away her husband, oh, grief! not even yielding back his dead body; the fever had claimed her second son, and poverty, gaunt spectre, had driven her first-born to America: so that, out of them all, she had only Anna left.

But Anna was a treasure of a daughter.

"She'll never make me sup sorra," Catherine often said as she thought lovingly of her. Anna, like her mother, was a lace-maker; but instead of working at home, as Catherine had done, she was employed in a small factory in the town, where, of all the girls, she was the most skilful. While others only made the lace in lots of the same pattern, she was

given special commissions—a wedding-veil, or a train-piece, or a christening-robe for the child of some grand lady.

This daughter of the poor widow was beautiful. Her black hair waved round her shapely head, and while her cheek was somewhat pale, her glowing, tender eyes lighted up her face. Her figure was tall and straight. Grace, swiftness and dignity were in all her movements. Withal she was simple and modest. Sometimes she had to show off lace-pieces to the buyers. It was then she looked most lovely, blushing slightly as she threw the gauzy things round her shoulder. It was on such an occasion that her lover had first seen her. Her beauty had struck him. Martin Graham was a lace-buyer, and a great man of business, young, handsome, with a flattering tongue. It was no wonder he won the simple heart of Anna with ease. When they were married, Martin had decided, he was going to set up a lace-shop for himself. It was with pride and satisfaction he imagined Anna as his wife, well-dressed, her manners improved by himself, selling lace in his shop. She would be a treasure of a wife. For she was a beauty, and Martin was a great man of business.

"You'll show off the lace, and how the grand ladies will envy you," he would say often, looking at Anna with his bold, admiring eyes.

But she only blushed and trembled at his boastful speeches, and carried a secret sorrow in her heart. For in all his plans and promises there was never any mention of Catherine, her mother. Clearly Martin did not intend to take her with them. She and her mother would have to part, that mother by the toil of whose fingers and the sight of whose eyes she had been reared, who had patiently trained her own little fingers so that she was now able to make a living with ease. In her imagination she saw the old woman on her wedding-day standing wistfully in the house-door watching her as she departed from her for ever. Marrying meant a great deal more than love, she thought.

Once she had timidly asked Martin the question that many a time trembled on her lips.

"Won't the mother come with us when we are married, Martin?"

But he laughed his light laugh, and threw his arm round her, answering half-jokingly:

"So you would like me to marry the family, little girl. Well, I don't know that we will do that."

So she lived on, torn between two loves, fretted and unhappy. Sometimes she would determine to speak to Martin openly, and if necessary to break with him altogether; but in his presence her resolution vanished. She loved him: that was all.

"I would die now without him," she thought within herself. "God pity me." As it was, she grew pale and silent.

All through the winter Catherine sewed, making clothes for her girl. She was secretly engaged on something else

which was to be her dowry to her daughter—all she had to give. While she worked she sang old *suanthrees* she had not sung since Anna was a tiny baby. They reminded her of old times, old joys, old griefs. She had plenty of time for thinking, for it was slow work, and her eyes were dim.

"I'm afraid 'twill be the last sewing they will ever do," she would say to herself.

One day Anna received a letter from Martin asking her to meet him—he had something important to say.

"It is likely Martin will come back with me, mother," said Anna as she set out.

"Whatever you like, asthore," Catherine replied. She had a happy confidence in everything that Anna did. The girl had never allowed her mother to guess the shadow of sorrow that hung over her soul, so the old woman dreamt dreams and looked upon the marriage as the happy culmination of her hopes. By Anna's side she would live and die.

"Well, it is for me," she would think, "that it wasn't some hard man from about was her choice, or a boy with a mother of his own to keep, and I to have to part with her for ever."

Of Martin in reality she knew little. He rarely came to the cottage. He did not like coming. Simple Catherine! How he had smiled in his black eyes at her mock jewellery. He himself had given Anna a ring set with precious stones and a comb of real tortoiseshell, which he had bought from a drunken sailor. He knew the difference.

Anna met her lover at the appointed place, near the outskirts of the town. He appeared moody and preoccupied. He was usually gay and endearing in his manner. But his moodiness was no rôle. He was looking forward to their wedding-day with annoyance. How he hated the thought of it. The country church, the gossiping onlookers, the rude figure of Catherine, the return to the cottage, the scene at the parting of the women. It must never be.

"I want you to come away with me in a few days, Anna," he said, steadily, determined not to beat about the bush. "We must be married as soon as possible. You must come to Dublin and stay with my people until then. You know my mother: she will be glad to have you. Tell your mother how matters stand this evening."

Indeed, Anna had seen his mother twice—a kind, silent woman, much in awe of her domineering son. As he made this cruel proposal she grew white with dismay. Her heart felt cold within her. Then her face flushed. She felt angry with her lover, who had it in his power thus to torment her.

"Oh, no—no," she said quickly. "I cannot do that, Martin."

He took hold of her hand.

"But why, Anna?" he said gently. "Don't you love me?"

"I do, I do," she faltered. "But how can I leave my mother like this? It will break her heart. It will kill her."

"Nonsense!" said Martin. "It won't kill her. You would have to part some time. It will be easier for her that it is over quickly in this way, without her seeing you married at all."

Anna clasped her hands tightly.

"But she trusted me always," she said earnestly. "She would never think I could do a hard thing like this on her. You don't know how she loves me, Martin."

"This is no hard thing," he replied. "She would have to make up her mind to it one day, I tell you. Come, Anna, tell her to-night and be ready to come away with me."

The girl looked at him helplessly. She saw it was useless to appeal to his mercy and ask him to take Catherine too.

"I must be going, Anna," he urged. "Promise me you will do this. You wouldn't let an old woman come between us?"

But she was silent, tortured with doubts. Perhaps she might do what he suggested. Other girls left their parents and married. Why not she? Catherine would get over her loss. The neighbours would be kind to her. She herself would come to see her sometimes. She would send her money and write her letters. Her mother would want for nothing. She heard Martin's oft-repeated promises in her ears. Her brain whirled. Indeed at the moment he was speaking.

"Can you not decide?" he was saying in persuasive tones. "I can wait no longer, Anna."

She glanced at him for a moment and it suddenly struck her that his voice was hard and his eyes cruel.

"No—no. Let me think," she answered quickly. "Let me think."

He saw it was useless to urge her further.

"Meet me here then to-morrow," he said with hardly veiled impatience, "and let me know what you will do."

She nodded her head in acquiescence, but her hand, as he held it, was icy cold. As he turned round at the bend of the road he saw her walking quickly towards home. But she did not look back.

As she walked along the girl's better feelings returned. All her thoughts were of her mother and of the latter's love and tender care of herself. She remembered Catherine when she was strong and active. What courage, what cheer, what a strong heart was hers. How hard she had worked from dawn till dark, scrubbing and even digging, so that it was a wonder such roughened hands could guide a needle with the skill they did. Now she was old and feeble and—the girl almost stopped in her walk as a dreadful thought struck her. Was Catherine getting blind? Her sight was certainly failing too rapidly. She had observed her sometimes groping for things even in daylight, but she had been so much occupied with her own affairs that she had scarcely thought about it. Oh, how selfish and ungrateful she had been! She hastened her footsteps almost to a run, fearing she knew not what.

It was nearing dusk when she reached the cottage. In the twilight a robin sang in plaintive snatches and the first stars began to shine out. She entered the house softly. A lighted lamp stood on the kitchen table, for in the badly-lighted room darkness had long fallen. The fire had burned low. A heap of garments, dainty as a lady's, were folded on the table, while in the wooden armchair lay Catherine asleep, worn out, holding in her lap a large square of the finest lace. One toil-worn hand still held the needle, the other had fallen down loosely by her side. A pair of iron-rimmed spectacles were pushed back on the white hair, where the poor tired eyes had failed at last. The lace was a wedding-veil, a surprise for Anna. Of course she would not wear it, but it would be a keepsake and a life-long token of her love.

The girl looked at the lace, which she at once divined was intended for herself, and then at her mother's face. So this was the being she was to desert so cruelly, these were the eyes she was to make run tears, this was the form she was to leave bowed in sorrow. Never, Never!

"I'll never do it," she cried aloud, flinging herself down beside the chair, a flood of shame and sorrow surging up in her heart.

"Mother, mother," she went on in low tones, "waken, waken and look at me." She took the old hand gently between her hands and stroked the furrowed cheeks.

"'Tis me, mother, 'tis Anna back, my own mother——"

"Yes, yes, asthore," said Catherine, sitting up bewildered. "I fell asleep. Why, what is the matter with you, alanna, at all, at all?"

She put her arms lovingly round the girl. "And where's Martin? I thought you were bringing Martin back this evening."

She stood up and Anna saw her groping in a dim fashion at the dresser where the delf lay.

"I'm never bringing Martin back again," cried Anna. "I'll never leave you, mother, for the stranger. I'm a wicked girl and a bad daughter to you to think of it. I was blind with—with——"

She did not finish, but hid her face in her hands, while Catherine begged her to tell her what troubled her.

Suddenly there was a knock at the door. Anna sprang to it, something like fear on her face. In the dark she recognised Martin.

"I came back, after all, Anna," he said off-handedly. "I just wanted to make sure your mother would understand. I'll tell her myself how it is." He made as if to come in. But Anna did not stand aside.

"No, Martin Graham," she said in a quiet voice. "You needn't say anything to my mother. I'm not going to do what you wanted me to do."

She stepped outside the door lest their voices should alarm Catherine, who had gone to the inner room.

"Go down the road and I'll be after you soon," she said, and as she turned away he was forced to do her bidding.

She then ran to her bedside and from a box she took a little bundle containing trinkets, which her lover had given her, at the same time undoing his ring which she wore on a string round her neck. In the candle-light the gems in it sparkled and winked at her. She had often slipped it on her finger and watched it twinkling. She was fond of pretty things. But now she pushed it in quickly with the other things, and running out of the house hurried after Martin.

After a while, as she did not return, Catherine went out to seek her. She found her sitting on the log of wood outside the garden hedge, her hands lying firmly on her knee. Her attitude was not one of dejection. Only her face was white and set.

"Come, come, alanna," said Catherine gently. She did not ask any questions. Of Martin she knew little, but she felt that with Anna his day was done.

The girl rose meekly, and as together they slowly returned to the cottage, the peace of the quiet night seemed to enter her heart.

EMILY DOWLING.

"Three Things are Hard to Me, and a Fourth I am Ignorant of."

—Prov. 30 18.

A shell pink-lined of prism hue,
Holding within its dainty curves
The sounding of the mighty sea.

A flower, rose-tinted, tipped with dew,
Whose fragile fragrant cup preserves
The perfume sweet that draws the bee.

A fledgling 'neath the parent wing
Where liquid note betrays the nest,
A-balance in a wind-rocked tree.

An Infant God's pure lips that cling
'Gainst circle of a Virgin breast
These are too hard for me.

M. ST. JEROME.

In the Campagna.

(To C. B. W.)

"Enough, we have heard it before; we shall hear it again
by and by."
—BROWNING, *Abt Vogler*.

We who have stood on castle walls together
On old Bracciano's streetways looking down,
And seen the lads stand laughing in the belfry
And dash its echoes o'er the little town,
And watch'd blue wood-smoke from the house-roofs rising
Of lichen'd tiles, and many a loaded wain
Beneath the piles of brushwood slow and stately
Come creaking up the country roads astrain,
And watch'd the level waters blue and silver
A-shimmer under winter's noonday sun,
Far down below the plunging steep and terrace,
Whereover flying-footed shadows run,
And, clad about with forest, crown'd with city,
Rocca Romana rising from the moe,
And Anguillara fronting Trevignano
On little headlands standing silver-clear;
We who have wander'd o'er the wild Campagna,
Thro' windblown oats about our heads asway
And lanes of wheat in lone Cremera valley
A-swelter in the afternoons of May,
And gather'd broken marble in the sheepfolds
On cliff-defended Veii's lifted plain,
And track'd the infant river to La Storta
Thro' copses starr'd with purple cyclamen;
We who have forded hidden streams together
And followed water-courses for our guide,
And stood upon the peak of lone Soracte
Above sun-flooded wildernesses wide;
We who have started serpents at Galera,
And climb'd the olive-steps of Tivoli,
And from the Monte Porzio terrace hearken'd
The Angelus of Monte Compatri;
Shall not we two together hear and see them
Caught up in sempiternal unity,
The sunlight and the starlight and the music,
The flooding skies and lands and sapphire sea?

H. E. G. ROPE.

Digby Mackworth Dolben.

ONE of the unexpected results of the war among us is that poetry seems to be coming once more to its own. And yet, perhaps, it is not altogether surprising. For the prevalence of death and of suffering on so appalling a scale demonstrates beyond dispute the transitory and precarious nature of prosperity and health and material comfort. And so, amid the roar of the cannon, the voices of the Arts are heard once more, speaking of things eternal; and in the words of a French writer, the soul cries out: "Yes, my God! I am great, and I had forgotten it." Some of the very soldiers are poets, and have written verses which critics praise and which (more remarkable still!) the public buys and reads. Yet it is not of these that I would speak to-day, but of one who, young like them, high-souled and pure, met with a sudden end so far ago as 1867. He was only nineteen when he died; but already he had written verses which Robert Bridges, the Poet Laureate, has collected and published in a little volume with words of high and generous praise.*

Very nearly half the volume consists of Mr. Bridges' *Memoir*, and, as we turn the pages, gradually a portrait emerges: a tall, refined, delicate youth, devoted to his mother, dutiful in his home, deeply religious though a little fantastic and quixotic in his fervour, singularly pure in heart. More especially is it interesting to Catholics to note the trend of this young mind towards full religious truth. Had he lived, he might have been a great Catholic poet. But it was not to be. "Suddenly God took him."

We must not wish it otherwise. He would open his eyes with a great wonder, a great gratitude, in the next world, I think—he who once said, with his religious difficulties in mind, "sometimes I feel so tired of it all, which is wrong." It would almost seem like the sequel to his little poem, "*Homo Factus est*," which he wrote as a schoolboy of sixteen, and which is one of the best known of all his poems. Here are some of the verses:—

Come to me, Belovèd,
Babe of Bethlehem;
Lay aside Thy Sceptre
And Thy Diadem.
Bid all fear and doubting
From my soul depart,
As I feel the beating
Of Thy Human Heart.
Show me not thy Glory
Round about Thy Throne;
Show me not the flashes
Of Thy jewellèd Crown.

* "The Poems of Digby Mackworth Dolben. Edited, with a Memoir, by Robert Bridges." Oxford University Press, 1915. 1/6 net.

Hide me from the glances
Of the Seraphim,—
They, so pure and spotless,
I, so stained with sin.

Hide me from S. Michael
With his flaming sword :—
Thou can'st understand me,
O my Human Lord !

Digby Mackworth Dolben was born in 1848 of a well-connected Northamptonshire family. His father's religion was of a decidedly Protestant type, but already at Eton Digby manifested those strong High Church tendencies which led him on step by step towards the Catholic Church. High Anglicanism was not so widespread in those days as it is now; and a lad who crossed himself and fasted—who even assisted other boys to fast by stealing their breakfast rolls, who annoyed his master on Sunday by what he termed "Catholic questions," who finally slipped off secretly to visit the Jesuits at Old Windsor—could not but be an element of disturbance at Eton fifty years ago.

Two things stand out in Digby's school life: his friendship with Robert Bridges, who was some years his senior, and his admiration for Manning, afterwards Cardinal Manning. Although Mr. Bridges does not so much as hint at it, no one can read the *Memoir* without feeling that the future Laureate's balance and judgment and sound taste in poetry must have been of inestimable value to the younger boy. Not always, indeed, would Digby show his verses to his friend—more particularly any which betrayed his intense affection for Manning, the "Archie" of the poems.

It was a deep and sincere attachment, or rather hero-worship, quite independent of personal intercourse, and which Manning certainly never so much as suspected. Mr. Bridges, writing of his friend's devotion, says:—

"To understand this ideal affection, one must fully recognise that its object was not only altogether worthy, but a person whom it was difficult not to idolize, if one had any tendency that way. Every one who knew Manning, whether as he then was at school, or in manhood, or in his latest years, or whether, as some did, they knew him throughout his life, all without exception spoke of him only in terms of love and admiration: nor have I ever met with anyone who knew him well, who would admit that for combined grace, amiability and beauty of person and character he had an equal. . . . He was a little older and taller than Digby, but practically his contemporary, with features of the uncharactered type of beauty, the immanent innocence of Fra Angelico's angels; and to have fallen into the company of one of those supersensuous beings was a delightful privilege. He was of gentle and perfect manners

and unusual accomplishments. . . . He was naturally simple and modest, and—at least in his schooldays—full of fun, and affectionately attached to Digby, though he never to the last had any suspicion that his friend was making an idol of him; no more than Beatrice had of her identification with the Divine Wisdom."

Reading this, we do not wonder that Dolben could write:—

"I marvelled not, although he drew
My whole soul to him, for I knew
That he was born to be my king."

And he grew uneasy in a morbid, boyish way at the intensity of his love, and began to fear that so strong an earthly friendship might detract from the great and Divine Friendship of his childhood, and shut out the vision of that fairer Face which must come first of all. Yet all the time, the Divine Friend he did in truth love so simply and so well was leading him forward; until, the winter before his death, he even went so far as to inform his father that he intended to join the Roman communion, promising, however, not to take the step before he left Oxford. The spontaneous Catholicism of his poems makes us feel that, humanly speaking, nothing but his early death prevented his formal entry into the Fold of Peter. In a poem found in his desk after death, he thus apostrophises Rome:—

Mother! to thee we turn.
O City of the Saints.

And he could write thus of the Holy Eucharist:—

Tell us, tell us, all ye faithful,
What this morning came to pass
At the awful Elevation
In the Canon of the Mass.
'Very God of Very God,
'By Whom the worlds were made,
'In silence and in helplessness
'Upon the altar laid.'

From Eton, the boy passed to private tutors, and difficulties gathered round him, partly due to his delicate health, and partly to his religious proclivities. At one time we read of him in a darkened room, living on grapes and tea; at another, we find him anxiously looking for a tutor with views "high" enough to please the pupil, yet not too "high" to alarm his father. Yet his home life appears to have been full of a quiet and happy tenderness, and for his mother he had a deep affection.

Mr. Bridges quotes in the *Memoir* a description of Digby at the age of eighteen by one of his fellow pupils:—

"My recollections of Mackworth Dolben are of a young monk of mediæval times. . . . In appearance he

was tall and slight, with a complexion of transparent pallor. He had good features, and fine dark melancholy eyes. . . . He had arranged the upper part of a bureau in his room with crucifix and candles and vases of flowers, and used to pray there after donning his monastic habit (that of an Anglican 'Third Order of St. Benedict'). His religion seemed to me a passion, and I was much affected at times by his fervour. . . . I always preserve an affectionate remembrance of his gentle and kindly nature. I think of him as a young saint so soon called to his rest."

For the poet was never to come to maturity. In June, 1867, he went back for a second time to Mr. Prichard, the kindest, wisest and most sympathetic of his tutors, to read with him for a few months before proceeding to Oxford; a fortnight later, he was drowned one afternoon while bathing in a stream near the house. Says Mr. Bridges:—

"It was beautiful and strange that, after all his unceasing mental perplexity, he should die unconsciously,—for he must have fainted in the water,—without pain, in one of his rare moments of bodily enjoyment."

Mr. Bridges' *Memoir* is a touching tribute to the long-ago friendship of his youth, and at the same time a generous and appreciative criticism of the genius of a brother poet. In religious matters he came to differ widely from Dolben, and with the "sacramental" side of his friend's life and poetry could not sympathise. All the more honour to him, therefore, for the candour and fairness with which he deals with a point of view he was far from sharing, yet respects because it is a friend's view—a friend of whom he writes, his love leaping back over the years:—

"As he went his way enthusiastically pursuing his imaginations, all intercourse with him was delightful, and all my remembrance of him is happy."

The English Laureate maintains that his friend's Greek lyrics surpass his Christian ones, but he makes an exception in favour of the exquisite little poem, "He would have His Lady Sing," which is after the manner of the "Blessed Damozel," yet glowing with the conviction that Rossetti lacked. It opens as follows:—

Sing me the men ere this
Who, to the gate that is
A cloven pearl uprapt,
The big white bars between
With dying eyes have seen
The sea of jasper, lapt
About with crystal sheen

Then it goes on to sing of "the town they saw withouten fleck or flaw," the town where "Knights and Dames go singing down the street one great Laudaté psalm," and where "Mother Mary walks in silver lily stalks." Finally, it concludes:—

"And Him Who sitteth there,
The Christ of purple hair,
And great eyes deep with ruth,
Who is of all things fair
That shall be, or that were,
The sun, and very truth.
Then add a little prayer.

"That since all these be so,
Our Liege, Who doth us know,
Would fend from Sathanas,
And bring us, of His grace,
To that His joyous place:
So we the Doom may pass,
And see Him in the Face."

Would that we might have kept the author with us a little longer! But the ways of God are not our ways. We cannot believe that Dolben was called away before his work was done. Rather do we deem him a favourite of Heaven, and see in his early death the answer to his youthful prayers, his sincere, unceasing effort to do God's Will:—

"I ask for Truth—
My doubts came in,
And with their din
They wearied all my youth.

"I asked for Thee—
And Thou didst come
To take me home
Within Thy Heart to be."

E. M. WALKER.

Character.

"Many things also must thou pass by with a deaf ear, and think rather of those things which belong to thy peace."

—"The Imitation of Christ."

WHEN you read such a title as mine is to this little paper, some of you will turn over the page in dread of finding a terrible treatise on the "oughts" of life—or a diatribe on the omissions—or a fusilade on the faults.

We all know the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius and how he says: "Live as on a mountain" . . . the editions of his wonderful work are ever open for the seeker of the perfect teacher . . . but down in the valley in the cottage "who can tell what just criticisms Murr the cat may be passing on us beings of wider speculation" . . . there is much subtle meaning in this saying of George Eliot, and it is full of imagination.

Sometimes we feel inclined to listen to the cat.

Pascal has said: "Ordinary people find no difference between men." This is indeed true, and it follows a still more forcible truth from this French giant of thought. . . . "The more intellect we have ourselves the more originality do we discover in others."

This quotation introduces the division of our subject . . . the mental and the moral side of character . . . sometimes we shall find that, like Frank Ledwidge's "wind-looped" flowers, it kills to sever the two.

Even in the midst of this raging war and with the echo of wrong and sinful passion ringing in our ears . . . when the mental vision of man is blurred and seared with the state of things as they are . . . let us firmly believe that the good in this world far outweighs the bad, that the very fact of so much known evil is a proof of the unknown good.

Is it not a fact that the news of evil brings such a shock, vibrates so quickly, and then is more dilated on and in consequence, becomes aggrandised, added to in course of tradition whilst good so seldom runs far down the stream. Why? Is it not that evil is foreign to us and good the part of our real nature, of our ultimate perfection?

We one and all love the good . . . even the worst of us, in their inmost depths, love and reverence it. I do not believe there is anyone so depraved who is not ultimately convinced of the beauty of goodness. This may seem a very far-fetched thing to say, indeed an outrageously exaggerated idea of human possibility. But may we not often discover that contempt, disdain, nay, repulsion, often hide a longing for what (to them) seems irretrievable the peace of *good*, and may it not be that their conviction of being totally beyond redemption and without the power of regaining that path of self-uplifting, keeps them at the lowest ebb, and yet their desires are not in the slime they have fallen in.

Be that as it may, certain it is that the horror at tidings of evil far exceeds the welcome of news of good deeds. The feeling about the latter savours of *sine qua non*, and the other is an abortion of what should be.

This being so, one can understand the veneration given to character. It is the attainment of perfection by the normal.

Novalis, that mystic, whom Carlyle, in his able essay says, possessed an intellect "high, fine, discursive" was a mathematician and naturalist, who gave to the world his "Thoughts," like Pascal, to whom he compares him. Novalis defines character as "a perfectly educated will." This definition, though expressing much, by no means includes the full purport of that stupendous power in the world—*character*—the stamp, the human impress.

Like health and holiness, moral and mental character react on each other.

What is the strength of character? The state of being perpetually in the presence of God. This is first and foremost, and through this Divine Witness of all that emanates from that person one gets that inexpressibly beautiful sense of a surrounding flood of grace. Then the perfection of soul takes its outlook on life and so opinions are formed and a nexus of ideas is produced and then upheld. And when, as life goes on, time seems to strengthen these ideas and opinions, the power of the character is shown in its keeping to these opinions, and (where one's sanctity would not permit an inroad of sin, the merest pin-point's encroachment . . .) so, no matter what allurements may come or what advantage be offered, our sentry duty is firm and honourable in their defence.

Willingness to overcome any obstacle necessitates firm conviction.

It is obvious I am now speaking of the groundwork, the ideal character . . . the flowers, the fruitage, the leaves, the leaves, the lights . . . these come from the soil of the groundwork, as the heat from the sun, and as each soil brings forth different flowers and varying fruits, so does character differ in its traits.

One of the most beautiful, and one of the very rarest, is unselfishness, not selflessness—a trait which may be merely pusillanimous and is full of delusions—but unselfishness, the pathos of which smites me whenever I see it. And it has been my privilege to see it in its perfection. Where? In one of God's beautiful women. She stands out like a vivid light across the path of my life. I shall never forget her, for her like comes but once to one so unworthy as myself.

Her character is the stronghold of her soul . . . her soul the precious treasure of that tower of strength she has built with eyes ever out across to others, not ever peering in, with that introspective blindness to others. The strong, firm principles of her character, like the very waves of strength, resist the strongest inroad . . . and with the strength, the sweet-

ness in what Evelyn Underhill so beautifully says "The little things" . . . "There doth my Godhead rest" . . . saith the Lord."

To express the pathos of her character, she walks denuded of herself, as though she had given us all, save her loving arms, which she stretches out to those she knows love her and draws them to her heart.

Yearly, daily, hourly do we see this unselfishness, and the tears come to my eyes with the thought of her silent, self-stripping for the sake of others. Silent, but bright, with the beauty of her soul. White

She walks, the lady of my delight,

Into that tender heart at night

The chastest stars may peep.

This unselfishness is sometimes accompanied by great charm of personality, which emanates from the very absence of the thought of ego.

There are so many complexities in the making of a character—environment, cross-currents, work, recreation, atmosphere, health, the health of others, pursuits, religion, education, inheritance, opportunities, heredity—endless they are, but nothing of good can be formed unless a strong foundation is first laid. You may forgive sins unnumbered if the will to be better is there—they do not *touch* the character.

A man with a great temptation ever bearing on him, ever endeavouring to overcome his struggle against it, whom one sees succeeding here, failing there, and yet ever with his will set on the final triumph over the evil, is a character more worthy of admiration and reverence than a person of that loathsome type who has never had the desire, or felt the temptation, and yet carps at the man who has, who for ever is divulging what he has heard, whose hands are metaphorically thrown up in Pharisaical horror. I say this latter is to be despised even if he have the credit of the Bank of England, and his position be unassailable, no matter how correct his outer life may be. Do you remember Dorothea Brooke in "Middlemarch," says "Failure after long perseverance is much grander than never to have had a striving good enough to be called a failure."

I shall never forget the late, much-mourned Father Maturin on this subject, and how his eyes burned with enthusiasm for the struggling character and his voice shook with vituperation for the self-satisfied, arm-chair saint. Indeed, the one was ever working, ever slaying himself for the sake of an ideal . . . perhaps never attaining it, suffering a tension untold, sometimes beaten with humiliation of defeat . . . at others prostrate in gratitude for a victory "in the highest regions of the soul."

In "Self Knowledge and Self Discipline" there is a wonderful passage on the words, "I cannot do the things that I would" . . . read it.

You may have a character of refined tastes, literary and artistic, merged in study and the beauties of culture . . . and you find that one day these generally deterrent influences, at one plunge, are immersed in a lower self. . . . Character which always stood out for all to see, and which was the inward comfort, if not the satisfying attainment . . . (for each character worthy of the name knows "Endless the way, followed with how much pain" . . . but knows at the same time . . . "the way was He") . . . in an instant the work of a lifetime may seem to be plunged into devastation.

Yet the apparent is only superficial in most cases, and like the beautiful soul of Matthew Arnold's poem:

"She said: 'I must go, for my kinfolk pray

In the little grey church on the shore to-day.

'Twill be Easter-time in the world . . . ah! me!

And I lose my poor soul, Merman, here with thee. . . ."

And never again does that soul return.

"But, ah! she gave me never a look,

For her eyes were sealed to the holy book."

Some will say the character must be troubled, weakened, hurt; the soul may be pure again and the moral life set right; but the character can never be the same. But it may be better, grander for the fall, and next time it is assailed, such recruiting power can have been gained as to make a man see, with Browning's glorious poem:

Why comes temptation but for men to meet

And master and make crouch beneath his feet

And so be pedestalled in triumph?

This verse in the immortal "Ring in the Book," reads like a Te Deum for the redemption of a soul.

We spoke just now of the mental side of character and there are two questions to be dealt with: the mental influence on character and the independence of character of that influence.

Sometimes you may meet with one of the finest characters, one of those grand women in our country homes, women whose memory even has no time to itself, whose whole outpourings belong to their home and the welfare of their family—Mrs. Poyser or Mrs. Pendyce, lovely creatures, of untold wealth in our social system, but who never study, never read, the one with the refinements of a gentle household, the other with the solid foundation of English respectability, both admirable characters—Mrs. Pendyce, with her mother's hunger, risking her very social status for the erring son; Mrs. Poyser steadfast in her rights, and in her devotion to the spotless ménage of her home and farm, who, with her mother-wit, even expresses ennui of a day's recreation. . . .

"There's no work so tirin' as danglin' about an' starin' an' not rightly knowin' what you're goin' to do next, an' keepin' your face i' smilin' order, like a grocer o' market day, for fear people shouldna think you civil enough. An' you've nothin' to show for 't when it's done, if it isn't a yalow face wi' eatin'

things as disagree." She is delightful; and in the grave issues of life, when poor Hetty Sorrel destroys her heritage of honour, the woman succumbs to the Mercy-seat. We see her an utterly native product of greatness of character.

Whilst, at the same time, a highly-cultured, refined student does not evince character in his social life—he may be super-sensitive, weak, and vacillating, but as a general rule, the mental does act beneficently on the moral, and refinement of mind and brain purifies the life.

One of the greatest proofs of this is the masterly George Frederick Watts; his life and work were bound together. In the remarkable life of this great artist and moralist, by his wife, a book replete with stimulating thoughts and mystic reckoning, he is revealed to us as the Signor in character as well as in name. His pictures were the fruits of his mind and soul.

I shall never forget his noble presence as he stood by the grave of Christina Rossetti as she was being laid to rest under the trees in the old Highgate Cemetery in 1894. His wonderful head and almost Venetian nobility, a speaking character.

Religion and culture, the pursuit of wisdom, and the attainment of sanctity create a character so infinitely lovely. Hence the priest with all the multitudinous duties is the most beautiful type of this, for he has the constant self-sacrifice, the complete unselfishness, to further enhance his worth, and no one can in the faintest degree measure that self-effacement.

Thus the friendship of a priest has the quality of a woman's—that unselfishness you so seldom find in a man's. A woman would sacrifice herself more completely than a man, and this makes her friendship by far the stronger, but a priest exceeds both, and may we not say it is his service and his friendship for his Lord that perfects his earthly ones. Irish priests in particular, they will do anything for their friends, both cleric and lay, and this is part of their actual character.

To return to my quotation from Pascal—"Ordinary people find no difference in men."

Outside the committal of evil, or the deeds of obligation and precept, there is the peculiar stamp of a man, which gives his interest, his distinctive note, his colouring. And how refreshing it is to meet one outside the standard measure. The book-lover, whose eyes are for ever scanning, whose glasses are lifted directly his fingers find a volume according to his love, whose books are his very passion, whose life is spent among them, whose mind is stored with their tidings; the gentle woman who gives herself for her loved ones, who forgets she has any desires outside their own, who turns a deaf ear to the promptings of a desire outside the giving, who, like a woman whom I met once, whose life was welded in a brother's, I shall never forget her surprise when I said, "Your voice is so weak, you must be tired." That she should be tired was a matter of such impossibility as the dawn of day to be late. That was nothing but absorption in her brother (a priest).

These are all different to the ordinary, normal character and an ordinary person would see no difference. "The more intellect we have ourselves, the more originality do we discover in others."

Some shun a person who thinks differently, who acts differently to the level, "live by rule," automatic penny-in-the-slot, without a spark of individuality.

What is more refreshing than the Celtic character, with its fund of humour and wit, its total disregard for small worries, its interest in everything outside the humdrum of life. They seem to have the inspiration of their own fresh nature ever buoying them up to live above the flat level of life.

I always think "Self-reliance" so grandly simple in Emerson's treatment, "Trust in Yourself," never excelled, and this is knit to his well-known "Character" where he says: "Character is centrality, the impossibility of being displaced or overset. A man should give us a sense of mass." Rectitude, high honour, infinite prudence, these want tenderness, love of other people, fear for their feelings, respect for their greatness."

The "Imitation of Christ," that cynosure of every spiritual mind, that Garden of refreshment, that purifying, penitential porch of the contemplative life, insists on two aims with even firm persistence—the cross, and the beauty of suffering. "In the cross is infusion of sweetness from above; in the cross is strength of mind; in the cross is perfection of sanctity." Thomas à Kempis also says, in his own pleading way, and let us realise that note of modernity:

"Many things also must thou pass by with a deaf ear and think rather of those things which belong to thy peace." I think that this should never cease echoing in a man's ears. It means a very world to some characters—some whose peace is their salvation.

Passing over the two extremes of character, the one Marcus Aurelius will have: "Live as on a mountain"; and the poor, shivering, soiled thing Seneca was thinking of when he said: "Some men, like pictures, are fitter for a corner than a full light." Let our last glance be at the man or woman who stands with the real character mark like a star on the temple, the pure, the strong, the inflexible, and binding all these (edged with golden charity) shall be that of religion, shall be the firm, unswerving, faithful stand to fight for your own ideas and principles, to withstand any breath against them, for no advantage to weaken that individuality which is God-given.

Like little, lovely children go the pure of heart in this world. Not alone packed away in the "Acta Sanctorum" dwell the saints of other days, with the character (the Divine stamp) pronounced in Rome, but they are touching our skirts in the streets, looking over our shoulders in the tubes and trains, listening to the same birds in the morning, not only kneeling before the little red lamp, but away on the field of battle, one can hear the dying martyrs passing to their Crown.

EDITH PEARSON.

Retribution.

By GREGORY BARR.

[The story "Retribution" is founded on the fact that at the destruction of St. Pierre only one person was saved, i.e., a prisoner condemned to death who was confined in the condemned cell which was below the ground. Some accounts declare that this man died three days afterwards from the effects of the shock. Other accounts assert that he survived and realised a large fortune by the sale of his photograph.—Author's Note.]

CHAPTER XV.

REMORSE.

The danger from the sleeping volcano grew every day more apparent; an ever-increasing underground cannonading roused the terror of the inhabitants of St. Pierre to the highest pitch. These fears brought many to repentance, but the greater number continued hardened in their crimes.

The prisoner, Victor Beauchamp, had been removed to the cell reserved for prisoners condemned to death: he was to remain in this cell until his execution. He was treated with every possible kindness by his jailer. The curé and Dr. Merriman were his only visitors: these believed in his innocence.

During the days immediately following his condemnation Victor had found it impossible to be resigned or to forgive the enemy who had wrought him this deadly injury. To be cut off in the vigour of his manhood—he was not yet thirty years of age—and to die the death of a felon and a murderer! Worse than all came the thought of Lucille, whom he so loved. She would believe him guilty—she would abhor him. No! he could not forgive the arch-traitor, the author of all his misfortunes.

"My friend," said the curé to him, "you cannot say in the Our Father the words 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us' unless you, too, forgive. Remember, the judgment of God is at hand for you. Do you wish to appear before it unshriven and unforgiven?"

Victor's better nature gradually asserted itself. He resigned himself into the hands of God, and not only did he forgive the enemy who had brought about his condemnation, but he prayed earnestly for the grace of conversion for that enemy.

On the eve of Ascension Thursday the curé was kept busy hearing confessions during the day. At nightfall he hastened to the prison to hear Victor's confession.

So terrified had the people become by the awful reverbera-

tions that the priests were kept up all night hearing confessions.

Next morning, at five o'clock, the curé brought Holy Communion to Victor Beauchamp, who received it with edifying fervour. About an hour later the jailer came with breakfast. Victor, when he saw the large supply of provisions the man brought, said smilingly: "Why, my friend, one would think you wished to bring me food for a week!"

"To tell you the truth, sir," replied the man, "my old woman is so afraid with the noise of these underground explosions that I have to bring her to-day to a friend's house twenty miles away, and I may not be back until evening; so, fearing the turnkey might not be kind to you, I bring you a good supply."

Meantime how fared it with the real criminal?

During the three weeks which had elapsed since the trial, Felix Legrange had lain in wild delirium. Dr. Merriman and Nurse Williams had tended him with the utmost skill and care, but nothing served to allay the burning fever which tormented him night and day. He raved incessantly and incoherently about Beauchamp.

During the night preceding Ascension Thursday, Legrange's paroxysms of frenzy became terrific. He cried out that the devils were surrounding his bed, trying to carry him off to prevent his writing some letter which he wanted to send Beauchamp. The wretched man would shriek out: "Save me! save me! They are grasping me; they are burning me. I never meant to kill Beauchamp—I never meant it. Look!—he is there. Write quickly that he is innocent. Oh! save me, save me." Then he would shriek and clutch the nurse in his agony.

She was horror-stricken. She had always believed that Beauchamp was innocent, in spite of the overwhelming proofs of his guilt. She now concluded that Legrange was the guilty man, and she prayed with all the fervour of her soul that God would restore him to his senses in order to save his soul, and in time to rescue the innocent man whom his wicked machinations had doomed to an unjust and disgraceful death.

The solemn tones of the cathedral bell summoned the worshippers to six o'clock Mass. The hollow booming of the subterranean artillery accompanied the sacred chimes: these ceased, but the former increased, gaining every moment in volume and intensity.

Nurse Williams went to a window in the sick-room facing Mont Pelée. No sign was as yet visible of the dire struggle in its cavernous depths. A lull came in the fierce strife, as if the mighty giant were collecting forces for the supreme upheaval. The very air seemed to stand still.

A faint voice called from the bed "Nurse!" She started. What a change in that faint voice from the agonising cries

of the previous night! Hastening to the side of the invalid, she found him perfectly lucid. She moistened his lips with a cooling drink.

He whispered: "I want you to write something for me at once—at once—and I will sign it."

She guessed what it was, and with a fervent "Deo Gratias" she brought writing materials from the escritoire.

The dying man gasped: "Write quickly—I alone am guilty of all the crimes charged to Victor Beauchamp." Then pausing from time to time for breath, he dictated the details of how he had accomplished both the robbery and the murder.

During the pauses she spoke to him of the mercy of God, conjuring him to confide in it and to ask God's pardon. Then the narration would proceed.

It was near 8 o'clock when it was finished. With a trembling hand he succeeded in affixing his signature, to which she appended hers as witness.

Something urged her to put this important paper into a fireproof safe. She did so and fastened the safe carefully.

CHAPTER XVI.

NEMESIS.

The nurse had just returned to the bedside and put the crucifix to the lips of the dying man, when, with a roar—as of a thousand cannon—the volcano burst and belched forth flames and lava.

One horrified glance Nurse Williams gave at the igneous monster. Three minutes later she and her charge were in eternity.

It seemed as if cause and effect were concomitant, so swiftly did the destruction of the devoted city follow that terrible explosion, which completely lifted the cap off the mountain. On the gaping summit a perfect wall of fire arose, and from it descended—on the wings of the whirlwind—a cloud filled with incandescent particles which burned and scorched all with which it came in contact.

On, on, past the city it sped, leaving death and destruction in its path. On, on, to the ocean it rushed—burning, charring, fusing. No life could exist where that blast of death passed. A whirlwind of flaming gas was swiftly followed by a torrent of burning lava and ashes that descended on the city and on the harbour, which was filled with vessels from every clime. Of these, only one, the *Roddam*, escaped destruction, its heroic commander, Captain Freeman, taking hold of the wheel and steering his vessel safely to Saint Lucy, though he himself was frightfully burned.*

Again and again the awful explosions were heard. So terrific were the reports that the people in distant Trinidad thought that a sham fight at sea was taking place. The ground heaved and yawned, steeples toppled, buildings

* Strange to say, this vessel, which escaped such imminent danger from fire, was lost on the ice in the Yenisei River in 1905.

crumbled and flames burst forth to complete the havoc wrought by the burning air and by the earthquake. Within less than an hour, of the teeming population of St. Pierre, all, save one, had perished. One, and one only, remained alive—the condemned prisoner in the city prison!

Victor Beauchamp—and he alone—was saved, whilst the man who had maliciously plotted his death and the men who had condemned him had all been killed. Beauchamp had appealed to Divine Justice—and Divine Justice had saved him.

The cell in which criminals condemned to death were confined was built underground, and this preserved Victor from being suffocated by the blast of burning air which rushed through the city: it passed straight ahead but did not descend. The prison shook and rocked, the upper walls crumbled, but the cell of the condemned man remained intact. Gradually the heat penetrated downwards and the unfortunate prisoner had to battle for his life. Luckily he had provisions sufficient to last for a few days, but he could neither sit nor lie down, so heated did the pavement become. He kept moving about until his shoes were completely burned, and the very soles of his feet were charred. Days were passed in this agony, and he gave himself up for lost.

Then a strange thing happened. The vault in which he was confined seemed to disappear, and in its place he saw a sick-room, in which Lucille, looking very ill, lay reclining on a couch. She seemed asleep.

Irresistibly he cried out: "Lucille, Lucille!" She opened her eyes and said: "I come, Victor. Courage, courage." And all gradually vanished, leaving him greatly consoled. Was it a dream?—or was it telepathy? he asked himself. In either case he felt strengthened in his struggle for life.

Meantime relief parties arrived from the neighbouring islands: these were accompanied by priests and doctors to minister to the survivors, if such could be found. But it was a city of the dead.

Workmen dug through the super-stratum of lava and ashes which covered the city. No living being appeared. Shout and call remained unanswered—all life had been annihilated.

When the débris of the cathedral was removed and the relief party entered it, a figure lying prone was observed facing the altar.

"That must be the priest," exclaimed Captain Herrers, who commanded the relief party. On lifting the prostrate form, a ciborium, twisted and fused, was found firmly clasped in the poor, charred hands. The ciborium was filled with sacred particles which were all perfectly white—not one of them being even discoloured in the slightest way.*

* This is a well-attested fact. About a year previously the same thing had occurred in a fire at Barbadoes, when a Protestant paper wrote: "This is only what might be expected if the Catholic faith be true."

Like the centurion in the gospel at the foot of the Cross, Captain Herrers recognised his God, whom he adored falling on his knees, the light of faith illumining his soul.

The city prison was next approached.

"I fear it is useless to search here," said Captain Herrers. "All must have been killed."

"Let us, however, try if such be the case," interposed a priest. "Some dying persons may be found to whom I could administer the consolations of religion."

Accordingly pick and shovel were quickly used. When a partial clearance of the débris had been made the men shouted, "Anyne here?" A faint cry was heard. The men looked at each other. Then, without a word, each worked as if his own life depended on his efforts. From time to time the men shouted again to encourage the poor victim buried beneath the ruins. His replies became more audible until at last a sufficient opening was made to allow of the descent of Captain Herrers and some of his men. They found Victor Beauchamp so weak as to be completely unable to move. The very flesh had been burned off his feet. On seeing the rescue party his joy so overwhelmed him that he lost consciousness. Restoratives were applied, and as soon as possible he was placed on an improvised lift and brought to the open air.

No other victim of the awful visitation could be rescued. All had been hurled into eternity on that fateful 12th of April, 1902.

CHAPTER XVII.

A RIFT IN THE CLOUDS.

During Lucille's dangerous illness M. Delormes had left the management of his business to his head clerk and had devoted himself entirely to the care of his beloved daughter. So absorbed had he been in that labour of love that he had not even read the daily papers. He knew of the awful visitation which had wiped out St. Pierre, but he had taken little interest in the details.

When Mme. Bunsen and Lucille were comfortably settled in their pleasant Breton home M. Delormes returned to Paris. He found that his affairs had prospered so well under the able management of his head clerk that he seriously thought of retiring from business and devoting the rest of his life to the care of his afflicted child, rightly regarding his own ambition as the primary cause of all her sufferings. Such a weighty matter as transfer of business required, however, both time and careful consideration. Meantime M. Delormes returned to Ivraie, where he found Lucille much improved, though her mind still remained clouded. If only some sudden joy would come to awake it from its lethargy!

M. Delormes resumed his custom of reading the daily paper. One morning he was seated in a shady nook of the garden facing the sea when he saw the postman going to the cottage with letters.

"Here, garçon," he called; "deliver to me."

Opening the newspaper his eye caught the flaring announcement in huge capitals:—

"ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY AMONG THE RUINS OF ST. PIERRE.—
THE CONVICT BEAUCHAMP INNOCENT AND HIS LATE ACCUSER
GUILTY!"

"We have already related the wonderful fact that the condemned prisoner Beauchamp was the only living being extricated from the ruins of St. Pierre: we have now received the additional and wonderful news that his innocence of the crimes imputed to him has just been discovered in the following marvellous manner. The Governor of St. Lucia sent a body of soldiers and workmen to search amid the ruins of Government House and the bank in St. Pierre for valuables which might have been preserved in fireproof safes from the terrible devastation of the 12th April. A large quantity of money and specie was found intact in one of the safes of the bank, and in another smaller safe a document was discovered which purported to have been written by Nurse Williams, who attended M. Felix Legrange during his illness, and it is signed by her and by Felix Legrange.

"This paper contains a full acknowledgment by the said Felix Legrange that it was he, and he alone, who committed the bank robbery, which he afterwards laid to the charge of the prisoner Beauchamp. The negro, Simon Flinch, came to know of his (Legrange's) theft, in consequence of which he (Legrange) murdered the negro and fastened the guilt of both crimes on Victor Beauchamp. . . ."

Further details were given, but M. Delormes read them not. The paper dropped from his hand—he was dazed—he was conscious but of two things, *i.e.*, Victor is alive—Victor is innocent! He kept repeating these words, as in a dream: "Victor Beauchamp is alive; Victor Beauchamp is innocent!"

"Say it again, father." And a hand was laid gently on his arm. A leap of hope to his heart! He took her hand gently, looked fixedly into her eyes and repeated:

"Yes, Lucille; Victor is alive. He is innocent. He is in the island of Saint Lucia, where he has received every care and kindness from the Governor—Victor—*your* Victor!"

"My Victor!" she repeated dreamily. "I saw him in prison—he called me."

"He is no longer in prison. He is free—as free as you and I."

"And he will come home: he will come back to me?" she queried.

"Yes, Lucille. I myself will go for him and bring him back to you."

(To be concluded.)



A Literary Circle For Young Readers of "The Cross."

Conducted by FRANCIS.

RULES OF THE GUILD.

- i. The Guild of Blessed Gabriel is a literary circle open to boys and girls under 18 years of age.
- II. The members will be expected to spread devotion to Blessed Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, by practising the virtues of purity, charity and truth; and by living lives worthy of him who is to be their model and guide.
- III. They will at all times observe the conditions under which the competitions will be held.
- IV. They will endeavour to bring as many new members as they can into the Guild of Blessed Gabriel.

MAY, our Mother Mary's own month, has slipped from us into eternity, and June, the month of roses and all summer's most beautiful flowers, is again with us.

And what is so fine as a day in June?

Then, if ever, come perfect days;

Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,

And over it softly her warm ear lays.

It is meet that the fairest of all the months should be dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Mary's Divine Son, to Whose loving kindness we are indebted for everything that makes life worth living. Remembering that all we treasure are His gifts, that even such good as may be in our nature is the outcome of His divine grace, what wonder that we rejoice in the thought that all through this beautiful month the brightness of the summer sun, the song of birds and all the beauty of "verdure, vale and river, flower and leaf" join in giving praise and glory to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Let us ask our Blessed Gabriel to help us to bring Him also the gifts most pleasing to His loving Heart of kindness and helpfulness to each other and to all our fellow-creatures.

Owing to disorganisation of the postal arrangements, and to other causes unforeseen at the time when our May number went to press, we were unable to get the issue out before the 7th May, and, consequently, many of my correspondents in the Guild, whose letters I have come to look forward to in pleased anticipation, were late in posting their usual contribution. (I say "were late in posting," for I do not like to think that some of them, at least, forgot me altogether.) I hope that my next month's post-bag will, by way of recompense, be filled to overflowing, to give joy to my old heart, saddened now by recent occurrences

Part, too, of the correspondence which reached me this month consisted of letters which should have been with me by 14th April. I must again remind members of the Guild that letters and contributions should be in good time for post each month, or they will not reach me at all until the following month. This has happened (among others) in the case of **Gretta O'Kennedy**, who writes acknowledging the beautiful book which she received as prize. Gretta is going to try and get as many prizes as she can, but after the June Competition she will be twelve and will not be able to enter for the Junior Competitions any more, and she fears that with such beautiful writers as we have at present she will have no chance at all of winning a prize in the other section. Gretta gives such a nice description of a cycle run round Dunsink that I haven't the slightest doubt she will before long be able to hold her own with any of our competitors. **Julia M. Kennedy** writes on a pretty Easter postcard to thank me for her badge, with which she is delighted. My own thanks and warmest wishes to her and the other dear friends whose cards and greetings for Easter have reached me late: **Josie O'Brien** (all the way from France), **Maureen O'Brien**, and **May Allen**. My old friend **Mollie Joyce** did not forget me either. Mollie is studying hard for an examination this month, and we must all pray for her success. She asks me to tell Mary Moran that she is not forgetting **THE CROSS** by any means, and hopes to write us next month. She also expresses the generous hope that her friend, Mary, will soon win a prize. I have heard nothing from Mary this month, but I, too, am hoping for something of that kind. Patience and perseverance, my dear friends!

Thinking of the manner in which my own business became upset in the first couple of weeks of May, it occurred to me that many of my little friends in the Guild may have commenced their essays and drawings to take part in the Competitions set, and been unable to finish in time, so I have decided to repeat the Competition set in May and to have no new one this month. The papers already set I have, therefore, laid aside to be adjudicated on with the others, which I hope will come in to me in shoals before the 14th instant. For the letters of enquiry which have reached me I return my warmest thanks; some have touched me beyond measure. My little friend, **Eily Barrett**, sends a very kind wail; she feared my office would be destroyed, but, thank God, she is right in thinking that her prayers and the prayers of all my children have kept me safe. The trouble did not come near my office, nor the office of **THE CROSS**, and I and all my fellow-workers there are quite safe, but it has been a sad and lonely time, and I would ask my children to continue to pray for me and also for all those to whom the recent disturbances brought sorrow or trouble. God grant that out of the suffering and affliction good may come, and that from the dark hour of sorrow she is now experiencing the dawn of a better day may arise to our dear country. I have a new member to welcome in the person of **Eileen McInerney**, from whom I hope to hear regularly in future. **Lillie Sinnott** brings two other new members, namely, **James Synnott** and **Bridie Connon**, to whom I also extend a hearty welcome. The intention mentioned in **Bridie's** letter I shall not fail to pray for. **Katie Kavanagh**, also, has asked for prayers for an intention, and I hope my children will supplement mine in both cases. I am sorry I could not fall in with Katie's other request, but she will understand. **Mairin Ni Chonchobhair** returns thanks for her pretty badge, and, judging by her letter, she is going to repay me threefold. And **Mehil O Chonchobhair**, not to be outdone, intends to become a promising member. There is also a promise from **Peter Burke**, of Castlepollard, to do all he can to get new recruits for the Guild. So my old friends had better look to their laurels. If the new ones are as good as their word, our new Editor will be hardly able to afford us space for all their efforts. But the more the merrier; we have a welcome for all.

- (1) All newcomers will please write a personal note to **Francis**, apart from their competition papers, asking to be admitted to membership of the Guild. (2) The age, full name and address of every new member must be given.

Important.

THE NEXT COMPETITION.

I.—For Members over 12 and under 18 years of age.

A handsome book prize is offered for the best short essay on "The Love of the Sacred Heart."

II.—For Members under 12 years of age.

A handsome book prize is offered for the best drawing of a flower.

All compositions and drawings must be certified by some responsible person as being the unaided work of the competitors. They must have attached to them the coupon which will be found in this issue (one coupon will be sufficient for all the members of a family), and essays must be written on **one side only** of the paper. They must be sent so as to reach the Office of "The Cross" not later than **June 14th**. All letters to be addressed:—**Francis**, c/o "The Cross," St. Paul's Retreat, Mount Argus, Dublin.

PASSIONIST MISSIONS AND RETREATS.

The following is the list of Missions and Retreats conducted by the Passionist Fathers during May and June:—Mell, Drogheda; Duncan Terrace, Islington; Franciscans, Canning Town; St. Mungo's, Glasgow; Sunnyside, Drogheda; Collinstown, Westmeath; Beneday Abbey, Sligo; Downpatrick; Cushendall; St. Joseph's, Bradford; High Park, Drumcondra; Coagh, Money-more; Crossmaglen; Ballintubber; Boyle; Ardglass; Castlepollard; Lytham Convent; Madden, Co. Armagh; Derrynook; Roscommon; Warrenmount, Dublin, and Pilkington street, Bolton.

PILGRIMAGE TO LOUGH DERG.

The party from Belfast will leave Great Victoria street for Lough Derg on Tuesday, 11th July, returning Saturday, 15th. As only a limited number of tickets have been issued, applications for same should be made before June 30th to A. J. McPhillips, 9 Rosevale street; or M. Donnelly, 95 Albert street, from whom all particulars may be obtained.

In Thanksgiving, Etc.

Sister M. Malachy (Cahir) sends two shillings and sixpence towards the Cause of Gemma Galgani, in thanksgiving for favours received.

Sister M. Philomena (Roscommon) forwards five shillings from a lady towards the Canonisation of Blessed Gabriel, for a special intention.

The above donations, for which we are sincerely grateful, will be duly forwarded to the Postulator at Rome.

Contributions towards the expenses of the Causes of Blessed Gabriel and Gemma Galgani and favours received through their intercession will be gladly acknowledged in these pages.

TO OUR PROMOTERS.—In answer to inquiries made from time to time we think it well to let supporters of this magazine know that all our supporters and promoters participate in the benefit of four hundred and thirty-four Masses, specially offered every year for benefactors by the Fathers of this Province, as well as in the prayers, penances and good works performed daily by all the members of the Congregation of the Passion.